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THE CENTER LINE

MONTANA HIGHWAY COMMISSION

Vol. 2 No. 1 January 1, 1959

LOOKING BACKWARDS

At this time of year, most of us like to take time to consider what we have accomplished during the last 365 days, and the Montana Highway Department, busily engaged in plans for 1959, does take pride on the gains made during 1958. A total of $37\frac{1}{4}$ million was awarded in construction contracts for 56.102 miles of Interstate, 221 miles of Primary and 308.751 miles of Secondary highways. The new Scott Hart Addition to our building was completed making it possible to gather nearly all of our personnel under one roof. The Bureau of Public Roads moved from Missoula into the penthouse, thereby greatly expediting our many negotiations with them.

Several administrative and personnel changes have been made to reduce duplication of jobs and to increase operating efficiency. Many new jobs have been delegated to our electronic computer - thereby saving many man hours. The leasing of our own plane and aerial camera has greatly aided our location and reconnaissance crews. By using photogrametric methods in the process of planning and design the need for a reconnaissance engineer has been eliminated.

An engineer has been assigned to negotiate with railroads, pipeline companies and power companies in ironing out the complexities of moving their facilities.

A former right-of-way agent and a draftsman from road plans were assigned to setting up a public information section.

Extensive use of new engineering advances were made - after thorough testing - in pre-stressed concrete and cement stabilization of soil in areas where gravel is scarce.

LOOKING AHEAD

1959 appears to be a bigger year in highway construction than 1958. If our plans materialize and we have sufficient funds, it is possible that we shall award about $60 million in new contracts. Present plans call for construction of 115 miles of Interstate, 150 miles of Primary and 220 miles of Secondary highways in Montana. Also on the drawing boards are numerous bridges, interchanges, overpasses and grade separations. We sincerely hope that when the end of the year rolls around we can again point with pride to the work we have accomplished.

LOOKING FURTHER AHEAD

We have been asked why we need new, wider highways. It is quite startling to discover the increase in the use of Montana's highways. By automatic counters located at strategic spots around the state and roving traffic counting crews, we find that in the last eight years traffic has increased from 200% to 400%. The number of registered vehicles in Montana has risen from 200,000 in 1948 to 351,676 in 1958. Our population is increasing at a rate above the national average and estimated figures show it has risen 32% during the last eight years.

These figures point out the need for roads which will handle a greater traffic volume. In addition to the number of vehicles using our highways, it is impressive to find that the increase of large truck and trailer combinations has amounted to 455% between 1936 and 1957. And, that the average weight has increased from 10.6 tons to 30 tons! We must also keep in mind that over 95% of all goods and produce used by Montanans move at one time or another by truck. We depend on trucks for delivery and quick service to retail outlets and to our homes. However, trucks, with their increased weight, need highways engineered to accommodate this greater weight and width.

PULLING THE LINE IN

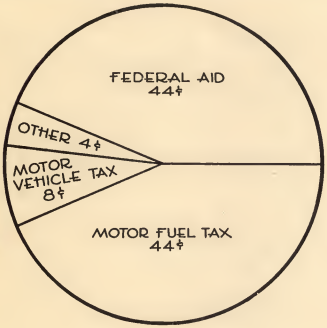
At the December Commission Meeting it was agreed that in the future only enough right-of-way would be purchased on the Interstate Highway to actually build the road and not set any minimum width needed. This will narrow the right-of-way in some instances by 100 or more feet. It will also mean that in other locations the present right-of-way will be sufficient. More hauls of material will be required to build roads to specifications but we will require less land in irrigated and pasture sections upon which to build the Interstate Highway. We sincerely hope that this will alleviate one of the most strenuous objections to the Interstate and will facilitate construction of this much needed highway.

NO MAPS

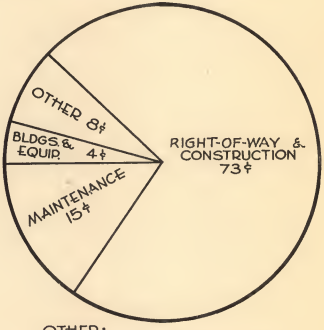
There are no project maps attached to this issue of "Center Line" because there were no jobs awarded in December and very few jobs completed. Therefore we decided that until our April 1st issue we will discontinue the maps.

THE HIGHWAY DOLLAR

WHERE IT COMES FROM



WHERE IT IS SPENT



OTHER:
LEAVE & RETIREMENT 2¢
ADMINISTRATION 2¢
OTHER 4¢

The above graph shows the source of Montana Highway Department revenue and how it is spent. Included in the "Other" category in income is royalty from federal oil lands and in "Other" in the spending graph we have many items too numerous to mention among which are - social security, workman's compensation, etc.